

SITUATION REPORT NO. 8
INCIDENT NO. 98-001
DATE: July 14, 1998 TIME: 3:00 p.m.

TO: Governor Edward T. Schafer
State Capitol
Bismarck, ND 58505

1. NATURE OF DISASTER: Devils Lake Basin and eastern North Dakota flooding.
2. DEATHS AND INJURIES: No change from previous reports.
3. DAMAGES: Devils Lake at Creel Bay had risen to 1,444.77 feet on July 14, the highest amount recorded to date. Forecasters for the National Weather Service expect Devils Lake to fluctuate during the next weeks. The lake crested earlier this summer, on May 29, at 1,444.69 feet.

Recent heavy rainfall, high water table, hailstorms and high winds have compounded flooding problems in the 13 declared counties and two Indian reservations, as well as the adjacent counties of LaMoure and Walsh. These conditions have damaged homes to a point where over 40 residents have been forced to relocate from their homes. In these areas, precipitation ranged from 125 to 200 percent of normal from April 1 to June 30. Most precipitation fell in June, with up to eight inches of rainfall inundating the affected areas. This additional precipitation has caused soil saturation, raised water table, and has filled the natural and manmade drainage systems to a point where additional rainfall results in more extensive flooding. Current precipitation trends are expected to continue through July 17.

In Cass County, officials report that excessive precipitation has resulted in nearly \$2 million in damages to public infrastructure. An average of 200 yards of gravel per mile has been lost on 325 miles of gravel county roads. Approximately 25 county and township culverts have been washed out, and bank slides have occurred at 10 locations. Approximately 20,000 acres of cropland and 5,000 acres of pastureland have been flooded.

On July 5, heavy rainfall totaling 1.9 inches caused additional flooding in Dickey County. The additional precipitation flooded one farmstead up to 12 inches on the main floor. Another farmstead was being sandbagged because water was within five inches of the house. More than 15.46 inches of rain fell during March, April, May and June compared to a 30-year average of 9.33 inches.

In Emmons County, thunderstorms with straight-line winds caused considerable damage to homes and outbuilding on six farms west of Strasburg on July 6. West of Strasburg, two manufactured homes and two steel bins were destroyed, and one farm home sustained roof damage during the storm. Farmers reported considerable hail damage to buildings and crops in the Hague area. One homeowner reported basement water damage. County agricultural officials recorded a 40 to 60 percent of yield loss for 24,200 acres of wheat, corn, barley, oats, sunflowers and alfalfa.

A torrential downpour of rain in excess of five inches, caused damages to public infrastructure and homes in LaMoure County on June 26. The heavy rain was accompanied by hail and high winds that damaged crops, buildings and roadways. Throughout the county, many township and county roads were impassible because either high water tables and or the additional precipitation had resulted in soft roadbeds or water was flowing over the tops of roadways.

The June 26 storm also caused problems in Ransom County, where winds were recorded in excess of 70 miles per hour. Rainfall measured 3.25 inches. The hour-long storm totaled crops in some areas, blew over trees, buildings and grain bins, and toppled some irrigation equipment. One McLeod area resident was forced to evacuate her home. County and township roads were covered with water, and some culverts were washed out. The Ransom County Sheriff's Office and Ransom County Highway Superintendent advised no travel on gravel roads after dark. The city of Lisbon was without power for three to four hours because of downed power lines. The Ransom County Emergency Manager has received 12 reports of individuals who have experienced flood-related problems because of the June 26 storm, high water table and/or runoff.

In Richland County, agricultural officials issued an updated report that the June 26 storm caused 100 percent loss of yield for 118,100 acres of corn, wheat, soybeans, sugar beets, alfalfa and hayland. The County Emergency Manager received reports of damages from 55 homeowners, reporting damages ranging from sewer backup to houses shifting on foundations.

The Sargent County Emergency Manager reported that three homes in Cogswell have first-floor flood damages. Telephone lines were failing because of high levels of water in the city. The county experienced yet another heavy rainfall on July 5, which slowed recovery efforts.

In Walsh County, heavy rainfall on July 2 and 6 have exacerbated flood-related problems created by spring runoff. On July 2, the Edinburg area received more than two inches in 20 minutes. Continuous rain showers have saturated the soil and roadbeds, flooded low-lying cropland, promoted disease and insect infestation of crops, and have forced river to remain high. These high river levels and heavy rain, as well as spring flooding, have caused one bridge that crosses the Forest River to drop about two feet because of bank erosion. Estimated damage is \$500,000.

Recent storm activity also has created problems in western North Dakota. Mercer County officials also report damages from heavy rainfall that occurred in the Hazen area on July 9. Because drainage systems were taxed, street flooding occurred, and vehicles stalled. In Williams County, 85 cars from one train and 15 from a second were derailed during a severe thunderstorm on July 5. The two trains, operated by Burlington Northern-Sante Fe Railroad, were at the Wheelock crossing at the time of the derailment. One was on the siding, while the other was passing the crossing at 3 miles per hour (mph). All cars were empty. The storm's high winds and hail also resulted in roof damage to mobile homes and many home windows were broken in the Blacktail Dam area. In the Epping area, the Farmers Union elevator had siding and its alley (scale area) torn off. A wind meter owned by Montana Dakota Utilities clocked wind speeds at 103 mph at 30 feet and 130 mph at 100 feet. Many trees were leveled and uprooted, power lines were downed, and extensive crop damage occurred. In Ward County, a July 6 severe storm resulted in a 50 percent yield loss for 54,000 acres of wheat, barley, oats, sunflower and corn. Farm building damage was estimated at \$100,000 and \$20,000 for equipment and machinery.

4. RESOURCES:

LOCAL: No change from previous reports.

STATE: No change from previous reports.

FEDERAL: No change from previous reports.

5. VOLUNTEER ACTION: Sargent Senior Services and Sargent County Food Pantry provided a meal each day for families displaced by flooding. Residents in Cogswell provided meals to the North Dakota National Guard units that provided assistance during the city's recent flood problems. The Salvation Army and the American Red Cross also provided assistance to residents.

6. MAJOR ACTIONS: Maj. General Keith D. Bjerke, the State Coordinating Officer, has requested revisions to FEMA-1220-DR-ND to take into account recent heavy rainfall, high water table, hail storms and high winds that have compounded flooding problems in the 13 declared North Dakota Counties and two Indian Reservations. These conditions are also contributing to substantial real and

personal property losses. In a letter to Lesli A. Rucker, Federal Coordinating Officer, Bjerke requested the following amendments:

- Implementation of Individual Assistance Programs for residents in all declared jurisdictions. Specific programs I am requesting include: Disaster Housing; Disaster Unemployment Assistance; Crisis Counseling; and the Small Business Administration's Disaster Loan Program. The State Coordinating Officer intends to also implement the Individual and Family Grant Program.
- Expansion of the type of incident to include severe storms; and,
- Close the incident period effective July 17, 1998.

A Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) for Public Assistance is underway in LaMoure and Walsh Counties, and a PDA for Individual Assistance is being conducted in Walsh County. These two counties have reported damages to public infrastructure and real and personal property as a result of recent heavy rainfall, high water table, hail storms and high winds.

The State Engineer issued an emergency permit to the city of Forman to open a ditch on the south side of town to allow for drainage of flood waters. Water levels have been dropping in most areas at a rate of about one foot in four days. Water levels have been slowly declining because of limited access to overworked culverts and drainage in the city. The water enters the Forman area from the west, runs through the golf course and backs up into low-lying areas on the northwest side of the city. A covered drain that runs adjacent to the railroad tracks takes the water out of this area and diverts it into a natural drain on the east side of town.

The National Guard has been providing assistance with flood-fight efforts in Sargent County. The Guardsmen are monitoring crisafull pumps, which were provided by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and are controlling traffic at two areas near Cogswell. The National Guard began its efforts on July 2 when soldiers relieved N.D. Department of Transportation crews.

Pumping operations are scheduled to end at Cogswell on July 14. The Sargent County Emergency Manager reported that the water line is four feet below flood level at the Cogswell lift stations. Water has been pumped off the city's main street and away from six homes in the community.

The USACE is helping Spirit Lake Tribe assess the potential for emergency assistance and repairs of levee systems on tribal land. Tribal officials are concerned that a potential rupturing of dikes in the St. Michael area could result in the loss of public land and private property, as well as the inundation of N.D. Highway 20. Spirit Lake Tribe Emergency Management is coordinating its flood-fight response and recovery work with Benson County Emergency Management and North Dakota Emergency Management.

North Dakota Emergency Management and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recently announced that assistance has been provided to the cities of Beulah, Grand Forks and Lisbon for efforts to mitigate potential flood damages. Funds were provided under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). The city of Beulah received more than \$134,000 in federal HMGP funds for flood-proofing its sewer system. The city of Grand Forks received \$16,000 in federal HMGP funds for the installation of flapgates designed to prevent sewer backup. More than \$231,000 in federal funds has been made available to the city of Lisbon in Ransom County to move and replace its main lift station. HMGP funds will be used to relocate the main lift station from the floodplain.

The LaMoure County and Walsh County Commission have issued disaster declarations. The city of Great Bend in Richland County issued an emergency declaration.

7. ASSISTANCE NEEDED: No change from previous reports.

8. OUTSIDE HELP ON SCENE: No change from previous reports.
9. OTHER: The next State Flood Coordination Center meeting is scheduled for 1:30 p.m., July 16, 1998, at the Ramsey County Courthouse basement meeting room.

Douglas C. Friez, State Director